

# **Shaping the Middle East in an Era of Revolution: Synchronizing U.S. Central Command Theater Engagement**

**A Monograph  
by  
CW5 John A. Robinson  
U.S. Army**



**School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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Approved by:

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Peter J. Schifferle, Ph.D.

Monograph Director

---

Bruce E. Stanley, MMAS

Second Reader

---

Wayne W. Grigsby, Jr., COL, IN

Director,  
School of Advanced  
Military Studies

---

Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

Director,  
Graduate Degree  
Programs

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## **Abstract**

SHAPING THE MIDDLE EAST IN AN ERA OF REVOLUTION: SYNCHRONIZING U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND THEATER ENGAGEMENT by CW5 John A. Robinson, U.S. Army, 48 pages.

This study examines the coordination of the Joint Phase 0 shaping activities that take place as part of Central Command theater engagement. The focus is on horizontal synchronization across staff elements and vertical synchronization through service components. The monograph identifies the strategies required to develop and execute successful synchronization of theater engagement in the Central Command area of operations, using the four-phase land and maritime targeting cycle, also known as the D3A methodology.

First, the study evaluates the three elements of theater engagement resident at the CENTCOM staff level: information engagement, theater security cooperation and interagency coordination. It further examines the information engagement sub-elements of information operations and strategic communications/public affairs. The monograph also evaluates the targeting support provided to each element of theater engagement. The monograph identifies where vertical synchronization is good and where horizontal synchronization is lacking.

The study then evaluates the three elements of theater engagement resident in the service component commands of Air Force Central, Army Central, Marine Corps Forces Central, Navy Central and Special Operations Command Central. The monograph also evaluates the targeting support provided to each element of theater engagement in those service components. The monograph identifies where horizontal synchronization is good and where vertical synchronization is lacking.

The study concludes with an action plan to enable Central Command to improve its effectiveness in synchronizing theater engagement activities, both horizontally and vertically, across its staff and through its service component commands. The monograph identifies the strategies to produce updated guidance, integrate disparate synchronizing bodies and fully support theater engagement through the joint operational targeting division. The monograph leverages the D3A methodology to structure the action plan as a comprehensive targeting process, suitable for planning and execution.

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## Introduction

On February 11, 2011, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak resigned under pressure after thirty years of autocratic rule. Eighteen days of largely peaceful protests succeeded in toppling a close United States ally and the leader of the largest Arab state in the Middle East. The seismic ripple effect of this revolution is rapidly spreading across the region. Political leaders in Iraq and Yemen have voluntarily limited their terms, the Jordanian king has sacked his cabinet, the Palestinian president has announced immediate presidential and parliamentary elections, Saudi Arabians have formed a new political party challenging the monarchy and fresh protests are forming in both Iran and Syria. In the face of burgeoning democratic movements throughout the Middle East, the United States must assess its diplomatic position and determine the impact of these events on its national security interests. At no time have our relationships with these countries been more important and we must continue to maintain these relationships through long-term, theater engagement strategies.<sup>1</sup>

As a unified command, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) commands all U.S. forces in the Levant, Arabian Peninsula and Central Asia, and has the capability, enabled through embedded interagency representation, to coordinate a whole-of-government and sometimes whole-of-governments

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<sup>1</sup> Al Jazeera. "Hosni Mubarak Resigns as President." February 11. <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/02/201121125158705862.html> (accessed February 12, 2011). Michael S. Schmidt. 2011. "Maliki Says He Won't Seek Another Term." *New York Times*. February 5. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/06/world/middleeast/06baghdad.html> (accessed February 12, 2011). Laura Kasinof & Nada Bakri. 2011. "Facing Unrest, Yemen's Leader Says He will Step Down in 2013." *New York Times*. February 2. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/03/world/middleeast/03yemen.html> (accessed February 12, 2011). Jamal Halaby. 2011. "Jordan's King Fires Cabinet Amid Protests." *Kansas City Star*. February 1. <http://www.kansascity.com/2011/02/01/2624022/jordans-king-sacks-cabinet-amid.html> (accessed February 12, 2011). Ethan Bronner. 2011. "Palestinian Leaders Suddenly Call For Elections." *New York Times*. February 12. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/13/world/middleeast/13mideast.html> (accessed February 12, 2011). Reuters. "Saudi Arabia: Political Party Formed." *New York Times*. February 10. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/11/world/middleeast/11briefs-Saudi.html> (accessed February 12, 2011). William Yong. 2011. "Iran's Opposition Seeks Rally to Back Egypt and Tunisia." *New York Times*. February 7. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/08/world/middleeast/08iran.html> (accessed February 12, 2011). Aryn Baker. 2011. "Syria is Not Egypt, But Might it One Day be Tunisia?" *Time*. February 4. <http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,2046426,00.html> (accessed February 12, 2011).

approach to theater engagement. During his tenure as CENTCOM commander, GEN David Petraeus conducted a strategic assessment in 2009 that determined “combating terrorism required a whole of governments approach. This meant that the U.S. could not go it alone, but had to work with the governments of other countries, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia.”<sup>2</sup> Yet, combating terrorism cannot be the sole focus of CENTCOM theater engagement. If we do not maintain quality military-to-military relationships with regional partners, outside the boundaries of combating terrorism, the United States will find itself flat-footed and without influence, when democratic movements in the Middle East remove autocratic political leaders, leaving military institutions as the remaining force for peace and stability, as in Egypt in 2011.

Given the criticality of theater engagement, how can Central Command be more effective at synchronizing its theater engagement actions, both horizontally and vertically, across its staff and through its service components? To understand the importance of synchronization of theater engagement, we must first recognize the importance of theater engagement itself. In the fall of 2009, while developing his administration’s strategy for combating Al Qaeda, President Barack Obama said, “We need to drain the swamp and reduce the appeal of violent extremism to young Muslims. We need to elevate our public affairs and our civilian affairs.”<sup>3</sup> The president apparently intended to promote the importance of information engagement and theater security cooperation, as viable alternative or complementing strategies to lethal engagement, including targeted killings. At the unified command and service component levels, theater engagement primarily consists of information engagement, theater security cooperation and interagency coordination. Information engagement consists of information operations, strategic communications/public affairs and public diplomacy. Joint doctrine stipulates that information operations includes “the integrated employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception, and operations security, in concert with

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<sup>2</sup> Bob Woodward, *Obama’s Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 190.

<sup>3</sup> Woodward, 189.



specified supporting and related capabilities, to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own.”<sup>4</sup> It also states that strategic communications includes “efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power.”<sup>5</sup> Joint doctrine further states that theater security cooperation includes “interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.”<sup>6</sup> Interagency coordination enables a whole-of-government approach, by involving non-Department of Defense agencies and departments in theater engagement activities and solutions. Ideally, theater engagement takes place in an environment free of conflict.

Joint doctrine identifies this environment as Joint Phase 0, or the shaping phase. In this phase, theater engagement is a “stabilizing activity” which includes “maintaining a safe and secure environment and providing essential government services.” According to DoD Directive 3000.05: Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations, these activities are a “core U.S. military mission.”<sup>7</sup> Synchronizing the actions of information engagement, theater security cooperation and interagency coordination is a function of the staff synchronization process.

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<sup>4</sup> Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, April 12, 2001), 229. The CCJ3-Information Operations division is responsible for this effort at Central Command.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 448. The Central Command Communication Integration (CCCI) directorate is responsible for this effort at Central Command. CCCI is a separate staff directorate and a direct report to the chief of staff. It includes communications integration (strategic communications) and public affairs elements.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 420. The CCJ5-Security Cooperation division is responsible for this effort at Central Command.

<sup>7</sup> David Ucko, *The New Counterinsurgency Era* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 73, 107.

While the focus of this study is primarily on the coordination of the shaping activities that take place in theater engagement, hard distinctions between Joint Phases 0 (Shape) and I (Deter) may not be readily apparent. Joint doctrine notes this overlap, with respect to theater engagement, by pointing out that “operations and activities in the *shape* and *deter* phases normally are outlined in security cooperation plans.”<sup>8</sup> The actual Joint Phasing Model is shown below, as Figure 1.1.

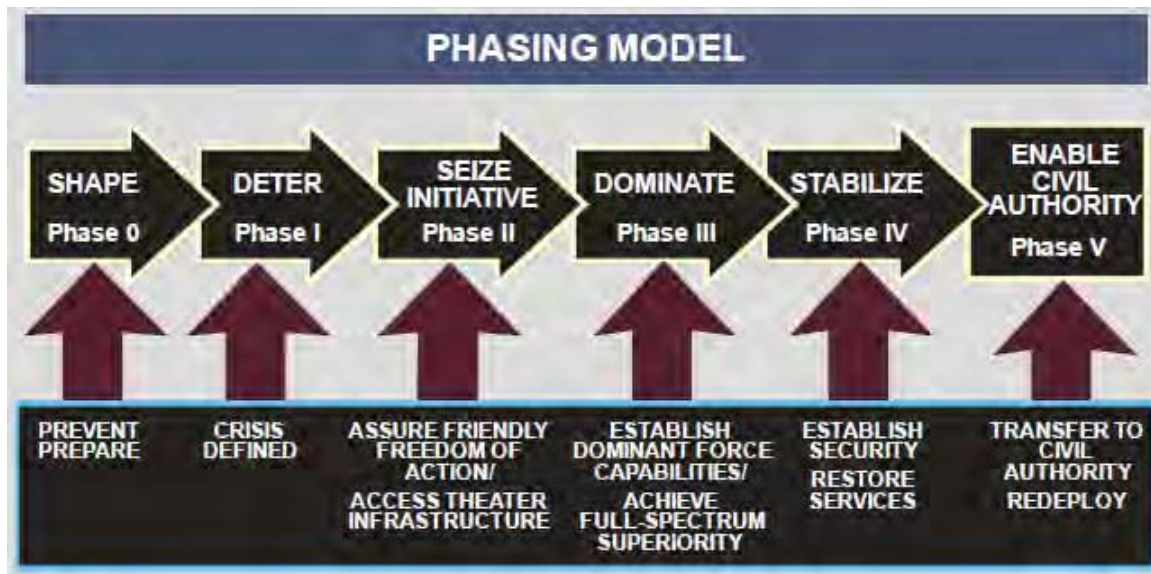


Figure 1.1: Joint Phasing Model<sup>9</sup>

*Shape* activities include “Joint and multinational operations and various interagency activities [and] are performed to dissuade or deter potential adversaries and to assure or solidify relationships with friends and allies.”<sup>10</sup> Central Command and its service components conduct numerous peacetime security cooperation and interagency activities to strengthen regional alliances (through security cooperation),

<sup>8</sup> Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 3-0 Joint Operations* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, March 22, 2010), IV-27. Central Command Directorate for Plans (CCJ5) Security Cooperation Division is responsible for developing theater security cooperation plans, in support of the unified command theater campaign strategy.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, IV-27.

<sup>10</sup> Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 3-0 Joint Operations* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, March 22, 2010), IV-28.

ensure continued access (in support of ongoing combat operations) and disrupt threat finance (through interagency activities). Similarly, information operations and strategic communications are focused on disrupting threat social media outlets (through information operations) and enhancing U.S. legitimacy (through strategic communications).<sup>11</sup> There is not a seamless transition from the *Shape* phase to the *Deter* phase. In fact, the conditions on the ground may provide for interpretive license. Therefore, the phasing model itself is meant to be illustrative, rather than prescriptive. The transition from *Shape* to *Deter* is executed once a crisis has been defined.<sup>12</sup> Joint doctrine defines a crisis as “an incident or situation involving a threat to a nation, its territories, citizens, military forces, possessions, or vital interests that develops rapidly and creates a condition of such diplomatic, economic, political, or military importance that commitment of military forces and resources is contemplated to achieve national objectives.”<sup>13</sup> As joint doctrine does not precisely define either *threat* or *vital*, the ambiguity of those terms may allow for a transition from Joint Phase 0 (Shape) to Joint Phase I (Deter), based on organizational definitions.

The intent of the *Deter* phase is to “deter undesirable adversary action by demonstrating the capabilities and resolve of the joint force. It differs from deterrence that occurs in the *Shape* phase in that it is largely characterized by preparatory actions that specifically support or facilitate the execution of subsequent phases of the operation/campaign.”<sup>14</sup> As an example, Navy Central conducts security cooperation exercises with Gulf Cooperation Council states to improve interoperability and coalition self-defense tactics, techniques and procedures. These exercises are routinely conducted during the shaping

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<sup>11</sup> COL John Robinson, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 8.

<sup>12</sup> Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 3-0 Joint Operations* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, March 22, 2010), IV-27.

<sup>13</sup> Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, April 12, 2001), 115.

<sup>14</sup> Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 3-0 Joint Operations* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, March 22, 2010), IV-28.

phase and may involve additional maritime vessels than the normal size of Navy Central presence. However, periodically, Navy Central may use these exercises as an opportunity to temporarily increase maritime presence as a deterrence mechanism for the Iranian Navy. The purpose of the increase in coalition maritime vessels may occasionally not be clear or may even be purposely ambiguous, but the actual operations themselves bridge the transition between *Shape* and *Deter*.<sup>15</sup> Regardless of the phase, the various elements of theater engagement must be synchronized both horizontally and vertically, across the Central Command (CENTCOM) staff and through its service components to achieve the objectives outlined in the theater campaign plan. That synchronization does not currently take place at CENTCOM.

Synchronizing the elements of theater engagement may be achieved through a comprehensive targeting process. Joint doctrine stipulates that targeting is “the process of selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them, considering operational requirements and capabilities.”<sup>16</sup> The purpose of joint targeting is to integrate and synchronize.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, targeting is synchronizing. Soviet theorist M.N. Tukhachevskii reminded commanders and staff that it is the synchronization process that makes operational command so complex.<sup>18</sup> While each of the related elements of theater engagement – information engagement, theater security cooperation and interagency coordination – do synchronize internally and usually vertically through their service component elements, they do not all synchronize horizontally across adjacent staff elements.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> LT James Kolb, e-mail message to author, November 7, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 3-60 Joint Targeting* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, April 13, 2007), I-1.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Army, *The Targeting Process, Field Manual 3-60 (DRAG Draft)* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, March 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 234. Tukhachevskii is cited by Naveh.

<sup>19</sup> Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 3-60 Joint Targeting* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, April 13, 2007), GL-9. Terrisa Bernard, e-mail message to author, October 20, 2010. The board is chaired by the J-3 and is a decision-making activity. U.S. Central Command, “Communication Integration Working Group Directive.” Central Command Communication Integration Directorate. Undated. Author is in possession of a

The four-phase land and maritime targeting cycle, also known as the Decide, Detect, Deliver, Assess (D3A) methodology, provides a streamlined synchronization process and is depicted below as Figure 1.2. The D3A methodology facilitates the engagement of the right target with the right asset at the right time.<sup>20</sup> This methodology is typically practiced by Army and Marine Corps organizations and is a part of their formal doctrine. Therefore, Army and Marine Corps leaders are more likely to be familiar with the methodology than their Air Force and Navy service counterparts.

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copy, which was received from CCCI on October 8, 2010. W. Jack Dees, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 8. Maj Erwin Larios, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 8. There are as many as four different targeting and synchronization activities taking place at CENTCOM, within the elements of theater engagement. The CCJ3-IO conducts a weekly information operations VTC, which includes participation from service components, as well as from theater IO activities in Afghanistan, Iraq and other elements within the forward AOR. The CCJ3-IAG conducts a periodic Target Synchronization Working Group (TSWG) to coordinate target engagement efforts against priority threat groups and networks. The TSWG recommends additions and updates to the Joint Integrated Prioritized Target List (JIPTL) and operations assessments. Joint doctrine stipulates that a JIPTL is “A prioritized list of targets approved and maintained by the joint force commander. Targets and priorities are derived from the recommendations of components and other appropriate agencies, in conjunction with their proposed operations supporting the joint force commander’s objectives and guidance.” The TSWG is the precursor to the periodic Joint Targeting Board (JTB). The JTB meets regularly to review targeting efforts and to consider recommendations from the TSWG. Service components are not routine attending members of either the TSWG or JTB. Coordination and synchronization between Central Command Communication Integration (CCCI) and the service components strategic communications and PA elements is through a weekly Communication Integration Working Group, via VTC. Coordination and synchronization between CCJ5-SC and the service components TSC elements is through a monthly Engagement Synchronization Board, via VTC. Targeting support to these four synchronization functions is provided by the CCJ2-Joint Operational Targeting Division’s Information Operations Intelligence Integration Cell, which includes support to the CCJ3-IO and CCJ3-IAG, but not to either the CCCI or CCJ5-SC.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Army, *The Targeting Process, Field Manual 3-60 (DRAG Draft)* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, March 2010).

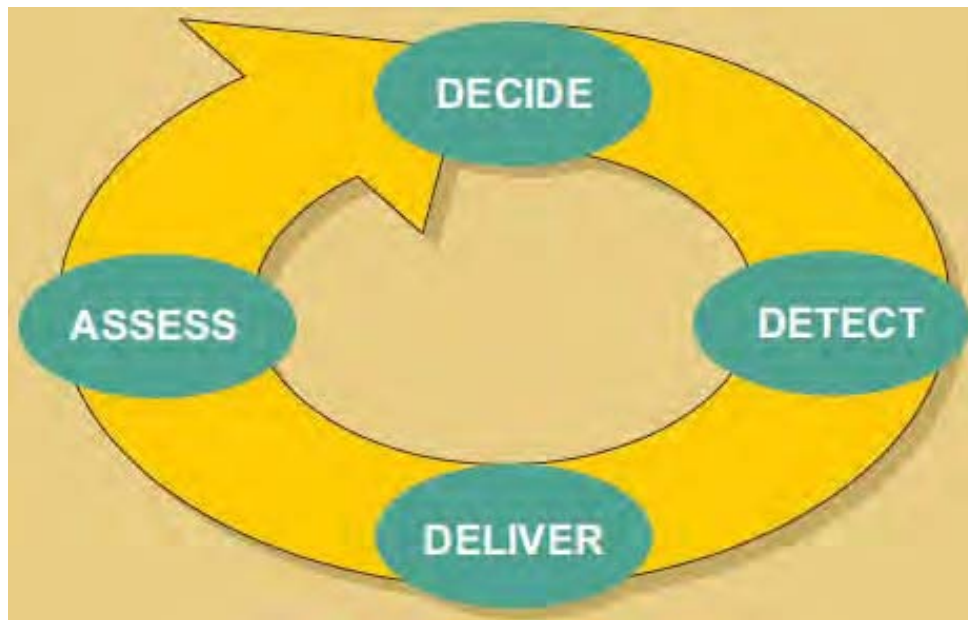


Figure 1.2: Four-Phase Land and Maritime Targeting Cycle (D3A Methodology)<sup>21</sup>

The Decide function provides the overall focus and sets the priorities for intelligence collection and engagement planning. For Central Command (CENTCOM) theater engagement, the decide function is accomplished through the information engagement strategy, jointly authored by the information operations (CCJ3-IO) and public affairs (CCCI) elements and the theater campaign strategy, authored by the directorate for plans and policy (CCJ5). The latter is the precursor for the development of the theater security cooperation plan, which is authored by the security cooperation division (CCJ5-SC). Currently, the information engagement strategy remains in staffing and the theater campaign strategy has not been updated since 2008. Consequently, there is no current theater security cooperation plan.

The Detect function specifies the who, what, when and how for target acquisition. For CENTCOM theater engagement, the detect function is accomplished by the Joint Operational Targeting Division's Information Operations Intelligence Integration Cell, in support of the information operations (CCJ3-IO) and interagency coordination (CCJ3-IAG) divisions. The Central Command Communications

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<sup>21</sup> Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 3-60 Joint Targeting* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, April 13, 2007), B-3.

Integration (strategic communications/public affairs) directorate and security cooperation division (CCJ5-SC) accomplish their own detect functions.

The Deliver function executes the target engagement guidance and supports the commander's battle plan. For Central Command (CENTCOM) theater engagement, the deliver function is reliant on the information engagement strategy and the theater security cooperation plan for engagement guidance. Currently, the information engagement strategy remains in staffing and the theater campaign strategy has not been updated since 2008. Consequently, there is no current theater security campaign plan.

The Assess function occurs at all levels and across the spectrum of conflict. Commanders adjust operations based on their assessment to ensure objectives are met. For CENTCOM theater engagement, the assess function is the responsibility of the individual executors of theater engagement – information engagement, theater security cooperation and interagency coordination.<sup>22</sup>

The research methodology of this paper relies on doctrinal review and interviews with both CENTCOM division and directorate leadership, as well as like leadership at the service component level. While the research is not intended to be a review of joint service targeting processes, the review of service component staff synchronization process integration with CENTCOM informs the evaluation of the CENTCOM internal staff synchronization processes. The research identifies horizontal and vertical staff synchronization and evaluates how adoption of the Four-Phase Land and Maritime Targeting Cycle, or D3A Methodology, would improve the effectiveness of that synchronization effort.

The research examines Central Command (CENTCOM) horizontal staff synchronization by major theater engagement element: information operations, strategic communications/public affairs,

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. Army, *The Targeting Process, Field Manual 3-60 (DRAG Draft)* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, March 2010). COL Steven Mitchell, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 7. Mitchell is the CCJ3-IO chief of plans and leads the information engagement strategy development. W. Jack Dees, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 8. Dees is the Deputy Director, CCJ5-Security Cooperation. In the absence of a theater security cooperation plan, CCJ5-SC coordinates directly with the OSD Undersecretary for Policy and host nation countries to develop individual country strategies. Maj Erwin Larios, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 8. Larios is the chief of the Information Operations Intelligence Integration Cell.

theater security cooperation and interagency coordination. This examination is followed by a review of targeting support to the theater engagement elements. The study then examines Central Command vertical staff synchronization, by reviewing the information operations, strategic communications/public affairs, theater security cooperation and interagency coordination of the service component commands of Air Force Central, Army Central, Marine Corps Forces Central, Navy Central and Special Operations Command Central. A review of the service components' targeting support to theater engagement is also included. The paper closes with conclusions and offers a series of recommendations. The concluding recommendations serve as an action plan to enable CENTCOM to improve its effectiveness in synchronizing theater engagement activities, both horizontally and vertically, across its staff and through its service component commands.

## **U.S. Central Command Theater Engagement**

The first detailed examination is of the CENTCOM staff, focused on the three elements of theater engagement executed during Joint Phase 0 (Shape): information engagement (including information operations and strategic communications/public affairs), theater security cooperation and interagency coordination, supported by targeting. Of particular interest is the background of the leadership, as Army and Marine Corps leaders are more prone to be familiar with and embrace the Four-Phase Land and Maritime Targeting Cycle, or D3A Methodology. Also of interest is the manner in which elements of theater engagement are mutually supporting and whether the targeting element is universally supporting.

### **CENTCOM Combined Joint Directorate for Operations – Information Operations**

The CCJ3-Information Operations division is led by an Army colonel. Information Operations (IO) Working Groups (IOWG) are held weekly and include targeting division (CCJ2-JOT) representatives, but do not always include Central Command Communication Integration directorate (strategic communications/public affairs) representatives. Therefore, synchronization across all



disciplines of messaging is not effected through the IOWG. The chief of IO Plans, also an Army colonel, is currently leading the development of an information engagement strategy to address this lack of synchronization in messaging. His current draft problem statement is “create a holistic communication strategy to consistently communicate and demonstrate across time and space, in support of the USCENTCOM Theater Campaign Plan.” This draft problem statement is the linchpin of a strategy that remains incomplete, as of the publishing of this research. This is partially as a result of the lack of an up-to-date theater campaign plan. The information engagement strategy development is to consider process, product and relationships, including service component relationships. This strategy development remains a work in progress.<sup>23</sup> Although the information operations (IO) division has led the planning effort for this development, IO is only one of the three components of information engagement, along with strategic communications (executed by the Central Command Communication Integration Directorate) and public diplomacy (executed by the political advisor).

## **Central Command Communication Integration Directorate**

The Central Command Communication Integration (CCCI) directorate leads the strategic communications component of information engagement and is headed by a Navy rear admiral (lower half), with an Army colonel who doubles as his directorate deputy and public affairs (PA) chief. The PA chief is a former strategic communications chief for Multi-National Forces-Iraq and is a basic branch field artilleryman. As such, he is intimately familiar with the Four-Phase Land and Maritime Targeting Cycle, or D3A Methodology. The PA chief describes the three executors of information engagement as CCJ3-Information Operations, the Central Command Communication Integration (CCCI) directorate and the

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<sup>23</sup> COL Stephen Mitchell, e-mail message to author, October 18, 2010. The most recent CENTCOM Theater Campaign Strategy was approved in 2008. The operational planning team (OPT) charged with this strategy development includes Central Command Communication Integration, CCJ3-Information Operations, CCJ3-Future Operations, CCJ5-Future Plans, CCJ5-Security Cooperation, CCJ2 Intelligence, Staff Judge Advocate, CCJ3-Interagency Action Group, the Coalition Planning Group and the Political Advisor. With the exception of targeting division representatives, the OPT representation is inclusive of all theater engagement competencies.

political advisor. CCCI sponsors the Communications Integration Working Group (CIWG), which is designed to synchronize the efforts of the three aforementioned executors and is chaired by the CCCI director. The CIWG process is described by the PA chief as “synchronize, integrate and engage.” The purpose of the CIWG is to identify threats and opportunities relative to communication and to develop and implement initiatives that reduce the “say-do gap” and focus actions, images and words to support the commander’s priorities.

The CIWG develops communication strategy to guide all engagement activities, specifying appropriate themes, messages, methods and desired effects. In practice, however, the PA chief believes the CIWG is a reporting mechanism, rather than a synchronization mechanism.” While he believes CCJ3-Information Operations participation is critical to the process, he states that “we [CCCI] don’t need to own CCJ3-Information Operations; we just need to own the process of information integration. It’s not right for CCJ3-Information Operations to own the process, because they can’t communicate in [Joint] Phase 0.” The PA chief believes outputs from the CIWG could flow to the CENTCOM Joint Targeting Board (JTB) (implying they currently do not), but he cautions that many communications initiatives are “time-constrained” and he asserts that the JTB is not sufficiently agile to respond in a timely manner. According to the PA chief, the distinction between Joint Phases 0 and I is difficult to distinguish at the strategic level. He illustrates this by noting that “Joint Phase V in Iraq is Joint Phase 0 in Iran.”<sup>24</sup> Strategically speaking, CENTCOM is responsible for both countries simultaneously.

Further, the distinction between operational and strategic level communications is also difficult to distinguish. “All lines blur at the strategic level,” asserts the PA chief, although he believes CCJ3-Information Operations is primarily focused on Joint Phase I adversaries. From a messaging standpoint,

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<sup>24</sup> COL John Robinson, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 8. See CENTCOM Combined Joint Directorate for Intelligence – Joint Operational Targeting sub-section below. Up to seven Information Operations Intelligence Integration section personnel from this division are embedded in the information operations division, to perform computer network operations and information operations intelligence integration.

the PA chief believes the distinctions between joint phases are less relevant, although from an authorizations standpoint references to phasing have greater relevance for information operations. Nevertheless, he cautions that the shaping connotation of Joint Phase 0 is not precisely applicable to the messaging discipline. “ Battlespace can’t be shaped, just tweaked,” he states. The PA chief agrees that targeting is a synchronization process and adds that the kinetic connotation of targeting that permeates much of the CENTCOM staff does not trouble him. He is comfortable with a targeting process that treats messaging as a “bullet,” but cautions the “effects aren’t the same.” The PA chief notes that in terms of battle rhythm and exercising staff synchronization in matters of Joint Phase 0 operations, “Central Command systems are in evolution.” He acknowledges that he receives no direct support from the intelligence directorate (CCJ2), but believes Central Command Communication Integration (CCCI) requires a dedicated CCJ2 embed, similar to that which CCJ2-Joint Operational Targeting provides to the information operations division (CCJ3-IO).<sup>25</sup> CCCI and CCJ3-IO, along with the political advisor, execute the information engagement component of theater engagement. The remaining two components of theater engagement are theater security cooperation and interagency coordination.

## **CENTCOM Combined Joint Directorate for Plans – Security Cooperation**

The CCJ5-Security Cooperation division leads the theater security cooperation component of theater engagement and is headed by an Army colonel with a Department of the Army civilian as his deputy. The deputy director describes a theater security cooperation planning process that has significantly diverged from the doctrinal methodology over the past two years. This divergence is primarily due to the lack of a unifying theater campaign plan from the plans & policy directorate (CCJ5), over the same period. Doctrinally, a theater security cooperation plan would be listed as an appendix to the theater campaign plan, with country annexes subordinate to that appendix. However, without such a theater campaign plan, the CCJ5-Security Cooperation division has engaged in an ad hoc, tripartite

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<sup>25</sup> COL John Robinson, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 8.

strategy of theater security cooperation plan formation, including regional working groups for the Gulf and Levant regions and a series of consultative staff talks with various Central Asian countries.

An Office of the Secretary of Defense military cooperation working group, often led by Undersecretary for Policy Michele Flournoy, has provided the overarching structure normally provided by a unified command theater campaign plan. In fact, the minutes of this military cooperation working group have become the de facto campaign plan, for purposes of theater security cooperation planning. There are no intelligence directorate (CCJ2) embeds to the CCJ5-Security Cooperation division, although CCJ2 does support security cooperation needs on a case-by-case basis. Nevertheless, the CCJ5-SC deputy describes the relationship between his desk officers and their CCJ2 counterparts as “tight and collaborative.”

When security cooperation is the driving factor, synchronization with public affairs is deferred to the embassies, rather than residing with the Central Command Communication Integration (CCCI) directorate. On a related note, a separate public affairs publication, the *Coalition Bulletin*, is published by the CENTCOM Coalition Coordination Center, rather than the CCCI. The *Bulletin* is published in both English and Arabic, but not Russian, giving it limited utility in the Central Asian states. The *Bulletin* is not published under the supervision of or with the coordination of the CCCI.<sup>26</sup> CCJ5-SC-led theater security cooperation, along with information engagement, is the second component of theater engagement. The third and final component is interagency coordination.

### **CENTCOM Combined Joint Directorate for Operations – Interagency Action Group**

The operations directorate’s (CCJ3) Interagency Action Group (IAG) leads the third component of theater engagement and is headed by a member of the Senior Executive Service (SES), with a Marine

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<sup>26</sup> W. Jack Dees, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 8.

Corps colonel as his deputy. The SES director is also a former Marine, having served as a regimental commander in Operation Iraqi Freedom.<sup>27</sup> A 2010 briefing on the mission of the IAG states:

USCENTCOM has identified Threat Networks/Groups and associated High Value Targets whose actions significantly influence the operations, direction and/or funding of terrorists and consequent insurgencies throughout the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility. Many Networks/Groups/High Payoff Targets operate outside USCENTCOM Combined Joint Operating Areas, free of pressure of U.S. military operations. These groups currently operating beyond the limits of our military authorities can only be neutralized, or their activities limited, through synchronized efforts in cooperation with our interagency partners. Integral to this effort is the development of synchronized U.S. military operations and U.S. Government actions that include Strategic Messaging and Themes, to deny safe haven and counter activities of approved Interagency Action Group High Payoff Targets.<sup>28</sup>

However, there is a disconnect between the mission statement and implementation. The primary synchronizing activities of the IAG are the Target Synchronization Working Group (TSWG) and the Joint Targeting Board (JTB). While both activities include the information operations division (CCJ3-IO) as a member, neither activity includes a representative from the Central Command Communication Integration (CCCI) directorate. Considering the CCCI ownership of the strategic communications portfolio within the CENTCOM staff, full coordination of “strategic messaging and themes” is inhibited by their exclusion from the TSWG and JTB.

The Interagency Action Group is charged with coordinating the activities of other government agencies, which may be able to affect areas currently unreachable through existing military authorities, to counter identified threats. These are agencies which primarily create non-lethal effects, including the aforementioned strategic communications components.<sup>29</sup> Creating these effects is the mission of the Interagency Action Group (IAG) and is included in their mission statement:

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<sup>27</sup> SES Robert Chase, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 7.

<sup>28</sup> USCENTCOM CCJ3-IAG Targets & Operations Coordination “Problem Defined”, 17 Aug 2010. Author is in possession of a copy, which was received from CCJ3-IAG on October 7, 2010.

<sup>29</sup> USCENTCOM CCJ3-IAG Targets & Operations Coordination “Leveraging Capabilities & Authorities”, 17 Aug 2010. The capabilities IAG may coordinate include host nation detentions, arrests and other legal procedures; host nation diplomatic efforts, including demarches, warrants and extradition; seizure of funds and Rewards for Justice Programs. These capabilities can create both positive and negative effects, including diplomatic

Synchronize strategic targeting and interagency actions focused against Threat Networks/Groups and associated High Payoff Targets approved for Interagency Action Group coordination, who significantly influence the operations, direction and/or funding of terrorists and consequent insurgencies throughout the USCENTCOM AOR.<sup>30</sup>

The synchronization of these actions takes place at the Joint Targeting Board (JTB). The IAG is the lead agent for the JTB, which is chaired by the Director of Operations.<sup>31</sup> At the conclusion of the JTB, a JTB message is released to the staff. This message is a directive to execute the JTB findings and approved decisions made by the Director of Operations, during the course of the Joint Targeting Board. It is treated as an internal fragmentary order. However, this JTB message is not directive beyond the staff and since it is signed by the Director of Operations, other staff directorates, including the Director, Central Command Communication Integration and Director of Intelligence, may consider its directives selectively. Further, JTB outcomes requiring interagency support are *negotiated* through IAG representatives, as CENTCOM is not empowered to direct other U.S. government agencies. Interagency representation within the IAG is very comprehensive, which contributes to what the IAG director describes as an IAG targeting methodology that is a “whole-of-government non-kinetic targeting process.”<sup>32</sup>

However, it is important to review what this targeting process lacks: it does not include strategic communications representatives from the Central Command Communication Integration directorate; it does not include theater security cooperation representatives from CCJ5-Security Cooperation and it does

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pressure, travel restrictions, financial forfeiture, deterrence, disruption, detainment, and arrest, as well as increased capacity, infrastructure, influence and development.

<sup>30</sup> USCENTCOM CCJ3-IAG Targets & Operations Coordination “Mission”, 17 Aug 2010. Author is in possession of a copy, which was received from CCJ3-IAG on October 7, 2010.

<sup>31</sup> The JTB is the successor to the Joint Targeting Coordination Board (JTCB), which according to joint doctrine, is convened to “conduct planning, coordination, and deconfliction associated with joint targeting.” The JTB performs the same functions of the JTCB, with the exception of coordination with service components. Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 3-60 Joint Targeting* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, April 13, 2007), x.

<sup>32</sup> SES Robert Chase, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 7. IAG includes representatives from the Departments of State, Justice, Homeland Security, Treasury and Commerce, as well as the Central Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

not include service component representation. Further, the findings of its two synchronizing activities, the Target Synchronization Working Group (TSWG) and the Joint Targeting Board (JTB), are not binding on the entire CENTCOM staff, to say nothing of their impact on the service components.

The Interagency Action Group (IAG) is primarily focused on the execution of activities in Joint Phase 0 and it is well-resourced, including management of a \$300 million counternarcotics budget. It exercises interagency teaming to counter irregular threats (external to the two combat theaters of Iraq and Afghanistan) and uses the National Counterterrorism Center to compel the interagency process. Due to this close relationship with non-military activities, the IAG often characterizes intelligence as evidentiary information and target selection standards vary in definition, so as to accommodate various agency needs. The IAG has its own Targets & Operations Coordination branch, which is not affiliated with the joint operational targeting division. This branch is responsible for near-term and current targeting, primarily of a non-lethal nature.<sup>33</sup>

The IAG leadership and joint operational targeting staff desires a return to the previous Joint Targeting Coordination Board (JTCB) process because such a board would be expected to include service component coordination, as it had in the past. The current joint operational targeting division chief believes it would not be resource intensive to integrate the service components into a JTCB-like structure. This is critical, because of the five service components, only Special Operations Command Central has an organic interagency process. The remaining components route their interagency needs through the Interagency Action Group (IAG) for action, but do not participate in the Target Synchronization Working Group or Joint Targeting Board.<sup>34</sup> In some cases, this has caused service components to engage government agencies directly, bypassing the IAG. This behavior has caused confusion for the agencies, which tend to first seek clarification from the IAG, when solicited by subordinate components.<sup>35</sup> IAG-led

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<sup>33</sup> SES Robert Chase, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 7.

<sup>34</sup> COL Adam Legg, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 7.

<sup>35</sup> Col Scott Walsh, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 7.

interagency coordination, along with theater security cooperation and information engagement, makes up the main components of theater engagement. The targeting discipline supports select components of theater engagement through identification and development of key engagement nodes, but does not synchronize those components through an engagement strategy.

## **CENTCOM Combined Joint Directorate for Intelligence – Joint Operational Targeting**

The intelligence directorate's Joint Operational Targeting division supports components of theater engagement through identification and development of key engagement nodes. This division is headed by an Army colonel, with a Navy commander as his deputy. The division chief is a former field artillery battalion commander and a former instructor of the Joint Targeting School, Dam Neck Naval Base, Virginia. The difference in backgrounds of the leadership is noteworthy and arguably impacts the mission of the division in two ways. As earlier noted in the description of the Four-Phase Land and Maritime Targeting Cycle (D3A Methodology) (Figure 1.2), Army and Marine Corps targeteers are indoctrinated in this methodology, whereas Navy and Air Force targeteers subscribe to the six-step Joint Targeting Cycle.<sup>36</sup> Since the Joint Targeting Cycle is designed primarily for lethal application, the simplicity of the four-phase land and maritime targeting cycle lends itself to easier application to the targeting and synchronization of non-lethal effects. Therefore, a targeteer's preference in cycle types might shed some light on his willingness to apply the targeting process to non-lethal effects. In short, the type of cycle one prefers may shed light on whether that person believes the targeting process is a suitable synchronization tool for the coordination of non-lethal effects. This may be reflected in the structure of the targeting

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<sup>36</sup> The Joint Targeting Cycle is an iterative process that is not time-constrained, but is a framework to describe the steps that must be satisfied to successfully conduct joint targeting. The six steps are: 1) End State and Commander's Objectives; 2) Target Development and Prioritization; 3) Capabilities Analysis; 4) Commander's Decision and Force Assignment; 5) Mission Planning and Force Execution; and 6) Assessment. Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 3-60 Joint Targeting* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, April 13, 2007), II-3. This preference is expressly underlined during the course of instruction at the Joint Targeting Course (JTC), Dam Neck, VA. The author attended the JTC in 1998.



division itself – a legacy structure that pre-dates the current chief. While the division provides full-spectrum targeting support to both lethal and non-lethal activities, only twelve of its approximately eighty personnel are dedicated to targeting in support of non-lethal effects – precisely the effects typically coordinated during Joint Phase 0 activities. Tellingly, the division reorganization that resulted in the authorization of these non-lethal support personnel has occurred during the tenure of the current division chief, an Army colonel who embraces the non-lethal support potential of the Four-Phase Land and Maritime Targeting Cycle, or D3A Methodology.

The joint operational targeting division supports the Information Operations Working Group, Interagency Action Group (IAG) and the Joint Targeting Board.<sup>37</sup> The division does not currently support either the CCJ5-Security Cooperation Synchronization Board or the Central Command Communication Integration Communication Integration Working Group – both synchronizing bodies for the application of non-lethal effects. The target validation board meets weekly and manages nominations to the command joint integrated prioritized target list (JIPTL). That JIPTL is then considered by the joint targeting board for finalization whereas, by doctrine, a joint targeting coordination board would normally perform that board function.<sup>38</sup> As the joint targeting board does not include representation from either CCJ5-Security Cooperation or Central Command Communication Integration, the JIPTL does not include nominations which might reflect broader Joint Phase 0 engagement in areas of security cooperation or strategic communications. The IAG deputy director desires that the joint integrated prioritized target list be more dynamic and describes the current version as a “dinosaur,” with individuals staying on the list for indefinite periods and non-personality targets disallowed from the list.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> COL Adam Legg, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 7. The Division also supports the Direct Action Working Group, Target Development Working Group and Target Validation Board.

<sup>38</sup> Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 3-60 Joint Targeting* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, April 13, 2007), II-8. See the CCJ3-IAG section for further clarification of the role of the JTB.

<sup>39</sup> Col Scott Walsh, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 7.

As previously noted, the Information Operations Intelligence Integration section of the Joint Operational Targeting division (CCJ2-JOT) was created in early 2010 and is currently led by an Air Force major. The section provides all targeting support for non-lethal activities, including information operations intelligence integration, computer network operations, targeting support to information operations and intelligence analysis for information operations. Up to seven section personnel are embedded in the information operations division (CCJ3-IO), to perform computer network operations and information operations intelligence integration.<sup>40</sup>

Theater engagement is comprised of information engagement, theater security cooperation and interagency coordination. Targeting supports theater engagement through the identification and development of engagement nodes. However, the Joint Operational Targeting division does not currently support either the strategic communications/public affairs component of information engagement, or theater security cooperation. Further, there are targeting core competencies, including the maintenance of joint integrated prioritized target lists and the development of target selection standards that are fragmented between the joint operational targeting division, the information operations division and the interagency coordination division. The four-phase land and maritime targeting cycle, also known as the Decide, Detect, Deliver, Assess (D3A) methodology, would be an excellent model to increase the efficiency of theater engagement synchronization. Implementation of this methodology would be particularly easy at this time, as all staff elements of theater engagement at Central Command are led by either Army or Marine Corps personnel, for whom the D3A methodology is service doctrine. Theater engagement is executed at both the unified command level and the service component level, through Air Forces Central, Army Central, Navy Central, Marine Corps Forces Central and Special Operations Command Central. Each of these service component commands has their own organic targeting support.

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<sup>40</sup> Maj Erwin Larios, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 8. The section was named “Information Operations Intelligence Integration” to eliminate the word *targeting*. The targeting division chief, deputy chief and Larios all agree that the term *targeting* has a distinctly lethal connotation in the Central Command headquarters. As lethal activities are more likely to take place in Joint phases II and III, rather than in phases 0 and I, which the Information Operations Intelligence Integration section primarily supports, this section was renamed to respond to internal sensitivities.

## **U.S. Central Command Service Component Theater Engagement**

The Central Command (CENTCOM) service components execute theater engagement as both a part of the overall theater strategy and as part of component-developed initiatives. Like CENTCOM, the first two elements of theater engagement at the service component level remain information engagement and theater security cooperation. Unlike CENTCOM, the execution of interagency coordination at the service component level is nearly non-existent, as a formal process. Further, while each service component has some semblance of resident targeting capability, the components are not uniform in the level of that capability or in how they use that capability to support theater engagement.

### **Information Operations**

Air Forces Central (AFCENT) headquarters at Shaw Air Force Base, SC (referred to as AFFOR) has recently completed a re-organization that established a Non-Kinetic Effects (NKE) branch, in lieu of the former Information Operations Team (IOT).<sup>41</sup> According to assigned information operations personnel, “there is no dedicated [strategic communications] organization within AFCENT.” The IOT-to-NKE transition will shift approximately four personnel to the AFFOR operations staff to “help with a lot of the [Joint] Phase 0 information operations effects.” AFFOR information operations leadership indicates that psychological operations (PSYOP) personnel are responsible for strategic communications at the

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<sup>41</sup> The NKE Branch includes special technical operations, electronic warfare and space planning and is expected to include a minimum of ten personnel assigned. According to Air Force Instruction 13-1.AOC, the Information Operations Team is a specialty team at an air operations center which, during peacetime, falls under the Strategy Division. This reorganization reflects the fractured nature of AFCENT operations. An Information Operations Team remains forward at the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) and consists of nine personnel assigned. Also forward, the Electronic Warfare Coordination Cell, consisting of five additional personnel assigned, functions as its own body in the Strategy Division, but not as part of the Information Operations Team, also contrary to Air Force doctrine. The AFFOR (Shaw AFB) formerly had twenty billets to support both the CAOC for day-to-day operations, and the AFFOR staff for future planning. The IOT-to-NKE transition has changed the scope of the information operations personnel and the reduced element has now been asked to “do more with less.” The original IOT was expected to assume strategic communications responsibilities, but did not, due to lack of manning.

Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC). The CAOC Information Operations Team has had an Army-trained PSYOP officer for the previous year and a half.<sup>42</sup>

The Army Central Information Operations section (G347) is subordinate to the Operational Fires & Effects division (G34). It has approximately sixteen personnel assigned; putting it at just over 60% authorized strength. The G347 shares responsibility for strategic communications with both the public affairs (PA) section and the plans (G5) International Military Affairs division.<sup>43</sup> The Marine Corps Forces Central (MARCENT) information operations element is subordinate to the G3 Future Operations section and has one person assigned. The element is not responsible for strategic communications integration, which it defers to MARCENT PA.<sup>44</sup> The Navy Forces Central information operations element (N2IO) falls under the N2 intelligence directorate (N2). It has nine Navy personnel assigned and four Army psychological operations personnel attached. N2IO is a participant in the strategic communications process, which is a separate activity and will be addressed in more detail in the strategic communications/public affairs subsection.<sup>45</sup> The Special Operations Command Central Information Operations / Military Information Support Operations branch falls under the operations directorate (J3) and has four personnel assigned. It coordinates strategic communications with its PA element.<sup>46</sup>

## **Strategic Communications / Public Affairs**

The Air Forces Central (AFCENT) public affairs element represents both AFCENT and 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force and has four personnel assigned. Their role in strategic communications efforts is mixed. According to noncommissioned officer-in-charge SSgt Amanda Currier, “the intelligence directorate (A2) is more

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<sup>42</sup> Douglas Clark & Capt James Newsom, e-mail message to author, November 15, 2010.

<sup>43</sup> COL Prentiss Baker, e-mail message to author, October 26, 2010.

<sup>44</sup> LtCol Ernest Robinson, e-mail message to author, November 9, 2010.

<sup>45</sup> CDR Michael Howell, e-mail message to author, October 31, 2010.

<sup>46</sup> LTC David Lieberman, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2010.

involved with ‘strategic communications,’ as far as large-scale efforts designed to influence public perception of the Air Force and its contributions to national security. However, the public affairs section is involved with strategic communications, in the sense that we work to shape coverage of Air Force stories and to get ahead of stories before they go public.”<sup>47</sup> The Army Central (ARCENT) public affairs (PA) section is a special staff entity and reports directly to the chief of staff. While strategic communications is a cooperative effort between the information operations (IO), PA and theater security cooperation (TSC) activities, and is coordinated primarily through the Central Command IO Working Group, the public affairs officer (PAO) is considering the development of a new organization called an Information Center. This organization would synchronize with the CENTCOM Communication Integration Working Group, the ARCENT political advisor, cultural advisor, knowledge manager, staff judge advocate and chaplain.<sup>48</sup> This is a concept the CENTCOM PAO has also considered.<sup>49</sup> The Marine Corps Forces Central (MARCENT) PA office is a stand-alone element and has two personnel assigned. The MARCENT PAO considers strategic communications to be “a poor term, used too liberally,” although he acknowledges conducting some messaging “at the strategic level.”<sup>50</sup> The Navy Central (NAVCENT) PAO falls under the Fifth Fleet Maritime Headquarters and has twelve personnel assigned, including two United Kingdom Royal Navy officers. NAVCENT has a separate strategic communications executive group that has senior level participation (O5-O6) from the intelligence, operations, plans, TSC, IO, strategic plans, PA, and public diplomacy elements.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> SSgt Amanda Currier, e-mail message to author, November 12, 2010.

<sup>48</sup> COL Gerald O’Hara, e-mail message to author, October 25, 2010.

<sup>49</sup> COL John Robinson, 2010. Interview by author. MacDill AFB, FL. October 8.

<sup>50</sup> LtCol Joseph Kloppel, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2010.

<sup>51</sup> CDR Amy Derrick-Frost, e-mail message to author, October 29, 2010. The strategic communications executive group reviews long-term schedules, event calendars and engagement strategies to determine what the strategic working group (O4 and below) should be developing, in support of an overarching strategic communication effort. These products range from a strategic communications slide deck for a particular topic or event, to a more robust, stand-alone strategic communications plan. The working group creates, the executive group

The service component information operations elements all participate in Central Command (CENTCOM) Information Operations (IO) Working Groups, led by the CENTCOM information operations division. The service components also participate in the CENTCOM Communication Integration Working Groups, led by the Central Command Communication Integration directorate. However, neither the service component IO nor public affairs (PA) elements participate in any CENTCOM interagency or other joint effects synchronization process. This means there is vertical integration of IO and PA between CENTCOM and its components, but not horizontal integration of IO and PA between the components. While all the service components now have political advisors (POLAD), this is a relatively new addition to most of their staffs.<sup>52</sup> Further, these POLADS work directly for the service component commanders, which may distract somewhat from their integration with staff engagement initiatives. Information operations and strategic communications/public affairs make up the bulk of the information engagement element of theater engagement at the service component level. The second element of theater engagement is theater security cooperation (TSC), in which each component also plays a role.

## **Theater Security Cooperation**

Joint doctrine states that theater security cooperation includes “interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.”<sup>53</sup> Air Forces Central TSC activities are

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reviews and then the product is briefed to a Council of Captains. If approved, the product is then presented to the commander for decision.

<sup>52</sup> The author was a member of the Army Central staff, 2007-2009 and worked closely with the various service component commands.

<sup>53</sup> Joint Forces Command, *Joint Publication 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command, April 12, 2001), 420. The CCJ5-Security Cooperation division is responsible for this effort at Central Command.

conducted by the plans directorate (A5) Exercises & Engagements section. This section has approximately thirty-eight personnel assigned. Of those, eight work exercises, eight work integrated air missile defense issues, and the remainder is made up of leadership, support staff and country desk officers.<sup>54</sup> Army Central TSC efforts are conducted by the G59 International Military Affairs section, which has approximately twenty-five personnel assigned; eighteen military and seven contractors.<sup>55</sup> The Marine Corps Forces Central TSC branch falls under the plans division (G5) and has five personnel assigned to the main headquarters in Tampa, as well as a few liaison officers scattered throughout the area of responsibility.<sup>56</sup> Navy Central (NAVCENT) TSC is subordinate to the Future Plans Center (FPC), which is one of three main components of the Maritime Operations Center (MOC). The Future Plans Center is essentially equivalent to a plans division (N5). The TSC element has approximately thirty personnel assigned, consisting of country engagement officers and liaison officers. Additionally, the element has one Coast Guardsman and two strategy planners.<sup>57</sup>

The service component theater security cooperation elements conduct engagement activities under the supervision of the Central Command (CENTCOM) theater security cooperation division and independently. Since CENTCOM lacks a theater campaign strategy, with which to develop comprehensive theater security cooperation (TSC) plan, the service components must exercise greater

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<sup>54</sup> Rodney Pressley, e-mail message to author, November 10, 2010. A5 E&E conducted approximately one hundred thirty theater security cooperation events in Fiscal Year 2010 and is expected to conduct a like number in Fiscal Year 2011.

<sup>55</sup> LTC Edward Villacres, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2010. The section conducted approximately eighty-seven theater security cooperation events in Fiscal Year 2010 and expects to conduct one hundred fifty-eight events in Fiscal Year 2011.

<sup>56</sup> LtCol Robert Young, e-mail message to author, October 28, 2010. The branch conducted approximately thirty-five theater security cooperation events in Fiscal Year 2010 and has approximately fifty events scheduled for Fiscal Year 2011.

<sup>57</sup> LT James Kolb, e-mail message to author, November 7, 2010. As NAVCENT includes named exercises, key leader engagements, operations and intelligence exchanges and other professional exchanges all under the rubric of "TSC events," the total number of engagements for Fiscal Year 2010 was several hundred and is expected to be similar in Fiscal Year 2011. As many of these exchanges are classified in nature, a more precise breakdown cannot be provided here.

reliance on their own abilities to ascertain what engagement opportunities are suitable for their execution. Central Command does provide guidance, planning opportunities and periodic TSC Working Group and Engagement Synchronization Board video-teleconferences, but the lack of a TSC plan at the unified command level requires service components to act with greater independence. Information engagement and theater security cooperation are two of the three elements of theater engagement. The third element is interagency coordination. In this element, the service components are found significantly lacking.

## **Interagency Coordination**

Air Forces Central (AFCENT) interagency coordination is primarily limited to Interagency Operations Security Support Staff (IOSS).<sup>58</sup> AFCENT does have a political advisor (POLAD), who works directly with coalition allies and provides a weekly classified political/military summary for review.<sup>59</sup> However, the AFFOR (Air Forces, Shaw AFB) Information Operations Team has never worked with the POLAD.<sup>60</sup> AFFOR public affairs use of the interagency process is dependent upon which agency has the lead.<sup>61</sup> AFCENT interagency coordination is conducted primarily through the State Department. Typically, the A5 Exercises & Engagements section relies on individual country offices of military cooperation to execute particular country issues. However, they do coordinate directly with the State Department for events conducted within the continental U.S.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Capt James Newsom, e-mail message to author, November 15, 2010. According to the Information Operations Team (IOT) chief, “the IOSS trains our program managers, hosts annual conferences, and recruits OPSEC professionals for various societies/organizations (like OSPA, OPS). Through these connections, a lot of information, products and plans are exchanged.”

<sup>59</sup> Douglas Clark, e-mail message to author, November 15, 2010.

<sup>60</sup> Capt James Newsom, e-mail message to author, November 15, 2010.

<sup>61</sup> SSgt Amanda Currier, e-mail message to author, November 12, 2010.

<sup>62</sup> Rodney Pressley, e-mail message to author, November 10, 2010.



The Army Central (ARCENT) G347 Information Operations section chief states that “there is not a process within ARCENT to execute the interagency process.”<sup>63</sup> ARCENT does have a political advisor (POLAD), who works directly for the commanding general, but is also involved in most working groups. The POLAD spends approximately 75% of his time at the ARCENT operational command post in Kuwait and the remaining 25% of his time at the main command post in Atlanta. The ARCENT public affairs officer (PAO) characterizes the existing interagency process as “broken.”<sup>64</sup> The ARCENT theater security cooperation (TSC) chief states he does not execute through an interagency process.<sup>65</sup>

The Marine Corps Forces Central (MARCENT) interagency process is executed under the purview of the MARCENT POLAD, through Central Command (CENTCOM).<sup>66</sup> The MARCENT PAO believes the CENTCOM Communication Integration Working Group is the appropriate venue for interagency coordination, although he also feels free to communicate with his public affairs counterparts at affected embassies.<sup>67</sup> The MARCENT TSC branch does not execute an interagency process, for lack of capacity, although the branch chief acknowledges he probably should. The TSC chief asserts that the POLAD is engaged and usually involved in all high-level TSC events.<sup>68</sup>

The Navy Central (NAVCENT) interagency process is executed through Central Command (CENTCOM) and NAVCENT does have its own political advisor (POLAD).<sup>69</sup> NAVCENT also has interagency representation on staff, to assist with the interagency process at the operational level, but they rely on CENTCOM to work interagency processes at the strategic level, including interaction with the

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<sup>63</sup> COL Prentiss Baker, e-mail message to author, October 26, 2010.

<sup>64</sup> COL Gerald O’Hara, e-mail message to author, October 25, 2010.

<sup>65</sup> COL Charles Pfaff, 2010. Interview by author. Ft. McPherson, GA. November 4.

<sup>66</sup> LtCol Ernest Robinson, e-mail message to author, November 9, 2010.

<sup>67</sup> LtCol Joseph Kloppel, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2010.

<sup>68</sup> LtCol Robert Young, e-mail message to author, October 28, 2010.

<sup>69</sup> CDR Michael Howell, e-mail message to author, October 31, 2010.

Office of the Secretary of Defense, other combatant commands and the State Department.<sup>70</sup> The NAVCENT theater security cooperation element does not execute through a formal interagency process.<sup>71</sup>

Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) interagency coordination is normally done on an issue by issue basis, via video-teleconference. SOCCENT does have a POLAD and the information operations element assists actions in support of public diplomacy.<sup>72</sup>

Ensuring the three elements of theater engagement – information engagement, theater security cooperation and interagency coordination – work in unison is a synchronization process. The synchronization process is a targeting process and is used in some manner by all the components to coordinate their internal theater engagement activities horizontally, but is not necessarily used to coordinate those activities vertically with CENTCOM theater engagement activities. The Army Central Shape and Targeting Boards, the Marine Corps Forces Central Marine Synchronization Board and the Special Operations Command Central Effects Working Group are excellent targeting/synchronization activities to coordinate comprehensive engagement within their respective components, but they do not have a Central Command outlet to synchronize those engagements vertically through the CENTCOM staff.

## **Targeting & Staff Synchronization**

The Air Forces Central (AFCENT) intelligence directorate Targeting Division (A2T) is a staff element within the intelligence directorate (A2), with twenty-four authorized billets. The A2T remains in close, regular contact with CENTCOM Joint Operational Targeting (CCJ2-JOT), although the A2T chief describes the coordination process with CCJ2-JOT as “ad hoc and informal.” Coordination with Navy Central targeting elements is also described as “ad hoc” and coordination with the remaining service

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<sup>70</sup> CDR Amy Derrick-Frost, e-mail message to author, October 29, 2010.

<sup>71</sup> LT James Kolb, e-mail message to author, November 7, 2010.

<sup>72</sup> LTC David Lieberman, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2010.

components is described as “infrequent.” Additionally, the A2T chief states that “A2T has no responsibilities or authorities to execute the interagency process.” A2T does not provide support to non-lethal efforts and instead devotes “99%” of its effort to lethal targeting. For this reason, the term “targeting” has a primarily lethal connotation within the AFCENT staff. The lethal targeting efforts are coordinated with other AFCENT staff elements through the planning staff, which includes coordination with information operations elements, but not with public affairs (PA) elements. The synchronization of staff elements is done through the adaptive planning process, which is considered by the A2T chief to be a parallel process to the targeting process.<sup>73</sup>

A2T personnel do not embed in either their Air Forces (AFFOR, Shaw AFB) Non-Kinetic Element (NKE) or the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) Information Operations Team (IOT), to provide dedicated targeting and intelligence support.<sup>74</sup> To synchronize IO initiatives with the AFCENT staff, the AFFOR NKE conducts a semi-monthly electronic warfare (EW) video-teleconference (VTC) and a weekly IO VTC with the CAOC. The EW VTC also serves to synchronize AFCENT initiatives with the remaining sister service components. IO and PA personnel also attend a quarterly theater security cooperation working group, sponsored by the AFFOR plans directorate (A5). Over the previous six months, AFCENT network warfare planners have been attending monthly Cyber Working Group VTCs, hosted by Central Command, which also includes the sister service components.<sup>75</sup>

Like the AFFOR IOT, the PA element does not have intelligence directorate embeds for intelligence/targeting support. In fact, according to the PA section noncommissioned officer-in-charge, “Public affairs and intelligence remain entirely separate entities, to maintain PA’s credibility with the public. However, PA and Intel meet frequently to discuss ongoing initiatives and avoid the dissemination

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<sup>73</sup> Maj Jamil D. Syed, e-mail message to author, January 21, 2011.

<sup>74</sup> Douglas Clark, e-mail message to author, November 15, 2010.

<sup>75</sup> Capt James Newsom, e-mail message to author, November 15, 2010. Cyber Working Group discussions include targeting opportunities and developing processes for requesting exploitation/attacks.

of conflicting messages.” This is a direct reference to the role of the Information Operations Team (IOT), as Air Force IOTs are staffed by intelligence personnel. Nevertheless, the coordination between intelligence directorate (A2) and public affairs (PA) personnel remains close. Other than Operations Security Working Groups and routine staff meetings, AFCENT PA does not cite any other specific boards or working groups in which they coordinate effects and messaging across staff or inter-component lines, although the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) PA element is involved in weekly meetings with sister components. The AFFOR PA noncommissioned officer-in-charge states that the section does not “currently have weekly meetings to coordinate initiatives” with Central Command (CENTCOM). This includes participation in the CENTCOM Communication Integration Working Group (CIWG).<sup>76</sup> This means that AFCENT participation in the CENTCOM CIWG is limited to CAOC PA elements only and does not include AFFOR PA elements from Shaw AFB.

Like the Air Forces (AFFOR) IOT and the PA element, there is no intelligence directorate embedded support to the plans directorate (A5) Exercises & Engagements (E&E). A5 E&E conducts periodic theater security cooperation working group meetings to coordinate effects across internal staff lines. To coordinate across sister service component lines, A5 E&E participates in CENTCOM-led Engagement Synchronization Board video-teleconferences, which are held monthly. The staff also conducts action officer working groups and consultative staff talks to formulate military-to-military plans. These are typically annual events.<sup>77</sup>

The Army Central (ARCENT) Target Production Section is part of the Fires & Effects division (G34) of the operations directorate (G3), with seven authorized billets. ARCENT is split into a main command post (MCP) in Atlanta and an operational command post (OCP) in Kuwait. The Target Production Section (TPS) resides at the MCP. Currently, the TPS includes four intelligence personnel assigned, responsible for analysis and liaison with the intelligence directorate (G2). The TPS remains in

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<sup>76</sup> SSgt Amanda Currier, e-mail message to author, November 12, 2010.

<sup>77</sup> Rodney Pressley, e-mail message to author, November 10, 2010.

close, regular contact with Central Command (CENTCOM) Joint Operational Targeting division (CCJ2-JOT), the OCP in Kuwait and the 4<sup>th</sup> Battlefield Coordination Detachment, split between Shaw Air Force Base, SC and Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.<sup>78</sup> The Army Central (ARCENT) TPS devotes approximately eighty percent of its effort to non-lethal issues and the remaining twenty percent to lethal issues. Within the Fires & Effects division (G34), the term “targeting” has a holistic connotation, but among the remainder of the ARCENT staff, the term “targeting” has a more lethal connotation. However, within the intelligence directorate (G2), the term “targeting” is also synonymous with the collection of information. To coordinate the ARCENT staff, the Fires & Effects division (G34), of which the TPS is a part, provides much of the oversight for the key staff synchronization boards and working groups, including the Targeting Working Group, Targeting Board, the Information Operations Working Group (IOWG), the Assessments Working Group and the Effects Synchronization Board. Coordination with sister service components and CENTCOM is done primarily through video teleconferences, email and periodic resident conferences.<sup>79</sup>

The ARCENT information operations division (G347) is authorized intelligence directorate personnel, but those billets are not currently filled. The information operations division synchronizes its activities with the rest of the staff through the IOWG, Theater Security Cooperation and Shape Working Groups and the Shape Board; the latter three of which are led by ARCENT theater security cooperation staff. To synchronize cross-component, the information operations division participates in the weekly Central Command (CENTCOM) information operations video-teleconference (VTC) and weekly CENTCOM Communication Integration Working Group (CIWG).<sup>80</sup> The ARCENT public affairs (PA) element does not have dedicated intelligence directorate (G2) personnel embedded, but does rely on G2

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<sup>78</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> BCD is a direct report unit to ARCENT and is responsible for air coordination and deconfliction between ground forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan and the Combined Forces Air Component Command at Al Udeid Air Base.

<sup>79</sup> CW4 Elmer E. Hoskins, e-mail message to author, January 7, 2011.

<sup>80</sup> COL Prentiss Baker, e-mail message to author, October 26, 2010.

personnel who support the ARCENT Information Operations Working Group (IOWG). The PA element synchronizes its efforts across staff lines through the IOWG and across component lines through the CENTCOM CIWG.<sup>81</sup> ARCENT International Military Affairs (G59) does not have any G2 personnel embedded. However, the country desk officers do rely on G2 products, counterparts and a networked staff. Additionally, they remain in close contact with the embassy country teams, including the offices of military cooperation, the security assistance officers and the defense attaches. G59 conducts two weekly working groups: the Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) Working Group and the Shape Working Group.<sup>82</sup> According the G59 chief, “Engagement for engagement’s sake won’t get you where you want to go, with scarce resources.” He acknowledges that cross-service component coordination is primarily by exception and is typically limited to the elimination of TSC fratricidal actions, rather than to achieve effects through synchronization. While he notes that CENTCOM theater security cooperation division (CCJ5-SC) chairs weekly VTCs, he asserts that “most de-confliction happens at country level, through offices of military cooperation and other component country representatives.” ARCENT G59 also participates in quarterly CENTCOM-led Engagement Synchronization Boards.<sup>83</sup>

The Marine Corps Forces Central (MARCENT) targeting effort is led by one officer, who doubles as the intelligence planner. MARCENT does not have a separate targeting element. As an intelligence officer, the targeting/intelligence planner serves as the link between the intelligence (G2) and plans (G5) directorates. The focus of the MARCENT targeting effort is exclusively lethal, related to long-term planning. MARCENT does not conduct targeting boards, but does participate in the MARCENT

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<sup>81</sup> COL Gerald O’Hara, e-mail message to author, October 25, 2010.

<sup>82</sup> These are action officer level groups, and can be scheduled as a board with senior officer participation, if a decision is required. The TSCWG is a synchronization forum for execution of theater security cooperation events. The SHWG is a planning meeting for reviewing progress toward objectives, assessing the relationships, and updating the country plans. The SHWG is focused on setting conditions, so that subsequent targeting is facilitated.<sup>82</sup> The SHWG is a full staff event, including both the forward and main headquarters. It includes an assessment of ongoing activities and relationships, relative to existing goals and objectives.

<sup>83</sup> COL Charles Pfaff, 2010. Interview by author. Ft. McPherson, GA. November 4.

Synchronization Board (MSB) and the targeting/intelligence planner remains in regular contact with all Central Command theater engagement elements, including information operations (IO), public affairs and theater security cooperation (TSC).<sup>84</sup>

With no intelligence directorate (G2) embeds in support, the MARCENT IO officer keeps abreast of changes in the information environment through attendance at the CENTCOM Information Operations Working Group (IOWG) and Communication Integration Working Group (CIWG), as well as through the Marine Corps IO Center video-teleconference. All IO activities are coordinated through the MSB, which convenes twice per week. IOWG and CIWG notwithstanding, cross-service component coordination is limited to weekly sessions with Navy Central.<sup>85</sup> The MARCENT public affairs (PA) element also does not have an embedded member of the G2. The PA element coordinates across staff functions through normal battle rhythm and weekly planning groups, as well as the MSB. They coordinate across service components and with CENTCOM through the weekly CIWG, through which they provide regular input.<sup>86</sup> The MARCENT TSC branch also does not have any G2 personnel embedded in support. The TSC branch is a regular MSB participant and uses that board to synchronize across staff lines. Coordination with other service components and with Central Command (CENTCOM) is conducted through periodic video-teleconferences and resident conferences.<sup>87</sup>

The Navy Central (NAVCENT) targeting element is subordinate to the contingency readiness department of the intelligence directorate (N2). It includes nine personnel assigned, all of whom are intelligence specialists. Approximately ninety percent of the targeting element's effort is direct toward lethal operations, including point mensuration and target material development for Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM) missions. The targeting element works closely with the information operations

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<sup>84</sup> Maj John-Michael D. Elms, e-mail message to author, December 6, 2010.

<sup>85</sup> LtCol Ernest Robinson, e-mail message to author, November 9, 2010.

<sup>86</sup> LtCol Joseph Kloppel, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2010.

<sup>87</sup> LtCol Robert Young, e-mail message to author, October 28, 2010.

division (N2IO), but only devotes approximately ten percent of its effort to that discipline. Targeting has a decidedly lethal connotation in the NAVCENT headquarters. Therefore, the targeting process is limited to the synchronization of lethal means (primarily TLAM) and is not used to synchronize the NAVCENT staff, across theater engagement disciplines. Coordination with outside targeting agencies is limited to CENTCOM and Air Forces Central.<sup>88</sup>

As the NAVCENT information operations division (N2IO) is part of the intelligence directorate (N2), intelligence embeds in support of the N2IO are moot. N2IO participates in various working groups and operational planning teams to coordinate efforts across staff lines. Coordination across service component lines is done primarily through video-teleconferences with CENTCOM. However, N2IO does host visits from other service components on a fairly frequent basis - usually monthly. Coordination through CENTCOM takes place through the Cyber Working Group, the Information Operations Working Group, and the Communication Integration Working Group.<sup>89</sup> While the NAVCENT public affairs (PA) element does not have an embedded N2 representative, it does maintain a round-the-clock Maritime Operations Center PA watch stander, who is fully integrated into the N2 and operations (N3) staffs and can brief the staffs, as required. Additionally, the PA chief asserts that because she “attends all the Ops briefs, Intel updates and so forth, a dedicated Intel element is not required, based on our construct.” The PA element has a local national on staff, who translates regional Arabic news for both reporting and tone. The PA element synchronizes its efforts through the Strategic Communications Executive and Working Group meetings, and other daily staff meetings. Cross-service component coordination is conducted through the CENTCOM Communication Integration Working Group.<sup>90</sup> The NAVCENT theater security cooperation (TSC) element has an intelligence directorate (N2) liaison officer who participates in some key meetings, but is not a formal member of the Future Plans Center TSC element. N2 provides good

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<sup>88</sup> LCDR Brian V. powers, e-mail message to author, December 19, 2010.

<sup>89</sup> CDR Michael Howell, e-mail message to author, October 31, 2010.

<sup>90</sup> CDR Amy Derrick-Frost, e-mail message to author, October 29, 2010.



background information for engagements, but more specific data typically comes from country teams and annual staff talks, which provide the framework for engagements for the following year. The TSC element participates in twice-weekly strategic communications meetings. Cross-component coordination, including that with CENTCOM, takes place through the quarterly Engagement Synchronization Board (ESB). Embassy staffs also participate in the ESB.<sup>91</sup>

The Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) information operations section (J3IO) does not have embedded intelligence directorate (J2) support. To synchronize initiatives with the rest of SOCCENT staff, the SOCCENT operations officer (J3) uses operational planning teams (OPTs) focused on the organization's priority countries and/or regions, within the area of operations. The J3IO participates in those OPTs, as well as a J3 joint planning group. To facilitate cross-service component coordination, SOCCENT conducts a weekly Effects Working Group video-teleconference with other service components.<sup>92</sup> J3IO also participates in the Central Command Information Operations Working Group.

While the targeting elements of the service components do regularly communicate with the Central Command (CENTCOM) joint operational targeting division, the lack of a CENTCOM consolidated joint integrated prioritized target list or established target selection standards requires the service components to generate these targeting tools, based on their own criteria. Further, while the CENTCOM joint operational targeting division does conduct regular, virtual synchronization working groups with the service components, these activities also include the targeting elements in Iraq and Afghanistan and are consequently focused on primarily lethal engagement discussions. This does not serve well the Army Forces targeting element, which devotes eighty percent of its effort to non-lethal targeting activities or the Marine Corps Forces Central or Navy Central targeting elements that remain

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<sup>91</sup> LT James Kolb, e-mail message to author, November 7, 2010.

<sup>92</sup> This is a new initiative to address a specific issue and cannot be covered in more detail, due to the classified nature of the issues involved.

solely focused on lethal engagements, for lack of broadening guidance as to how to apply their efforts to the non-lethal spectrum, especially in light of the greater need for targeting in support of theater security cooperation (TSC), given the lack of a Central Command (CENTCOM) TSC plan. Presently, the service component targeting elements adequately support their respective components through horizontal integration, but their potential contribution could be greater, with full-spectrum lethal and non-lethal guidance from the CENTCOM joint operational targeting division.

## **Conclusions**

CENTCOM theater engagement staff directorates and service components are competent in the execution of their respective tasks. However, there are clear opportunities for improvement in the synchronization of theater engagement activities, both horizontally across staff functions and vertically through service components. The four-phase land and maritime targeting cycle, also known as the Decide, Detect, Deliver, Assess (D3A) methodology, is not only an excellent model for increasing the efficiency of theater engagement synchronization, it is the right doctrinal approach for a CENTCOM staff that is doctrinally receptive today. The D3A methodology is accepted and practiced doctrine by both Army and Marine Corps personnel. Despite the multi-service nature of CENTCOM as a unified command, the key theater engagement elements are currently led by Army and Marine Corps officers, offering an excellent opportunity to leverage the current leadership to execute a doctrinally-understood program of improvements.

From an implementation standpoint, the current leadership of CENTCOM theater engagement elements is the most accommodating to synchronization improvements. Army and Marine Corps personnel understand the D3A methodology, both for its synchronizing functions and for its applicability to the Joint Phase 0 (Shape) non-lethal environments in which theater engagement activities are conducted. Theater engagement consists of information engagement, theater security cooperation and interagency coordination. Information engagement consists of information operations, strategic

communications/public affairs and public diplomacy. The information operations division chief is an Army colonel and his chief of plans (and lead developer of the CENTCOM information engagement strategy) is also an Army colonel. The public affairs chief is an Army colonel and basic branch field artilleryman, for whom the D3A methodology is also part of branch doctrine. The theater security cooperation chief is an Army colonel and his deputy is a Department of the Army civilian. The interagency division chief is a retired Marine Corps colonel and his deputy is an active duty Marine Corps colonel. Finally, the chief of the joint operational targeting division is an Army colonel, basic branch field artilleryman and former Joint Targeting School instructor.

The Decide, Detect, Deliver, Assess methodology also provides the right structural context for synchronizing theater engagement planning and execution at Central Command. The decide function leverages a theater campaign plan, theater security cooperation plan and information engagement strategy. The detect function mandates targeting support to all elements of theater engagement, for engagement node identification and development. The deliver function requires a synchronized decision process that integrates horizontal and vertical staff actions and develops decisions suitable for approval and execution. Finally, the assess function ensures that a subsequent staffing process occurs to evaluate the results of theater engagement execution and identifies opportunities for reengagement or shifting of resources. Individual theater engagement elements already conduct satisfactory synchronizing actions through vertical staff lines. However, horizontal staff synchronization should be improved. There are staff action redundancies that can be considered for streamlining or elimination of inefficiencies. There are multiple efforts to develop joint integrated prioritized target lists. Target development and information integration are fragmented.

Interagency coordination at the CENTCOM level is excellent, but generally lacking at the service component level. Air Forces Central, Army Central and Marine Corps Forces Central have no interagency processes and their respective theater engagement element chiefs all desire such a process. Navy Central has some interagency interaction, but primarily related to maritime activities only and not involving

information engagement or theater security cooperation. Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) is unique in its apparent satisfaction with its current interagency process.

Comprehensive effects synchronization exists at most components, but not at the CENTCOM level. Army Force Central has effective Shape and Targeting Working Groups and Boards, Marine Corps Forces Central has an effective Marine Synchronization Board and SOCCENT has an effective Effects Working Group. These service components use these working groups and boards to integrate and synchronize all elements of theater engagement, with the exception of interagency coordination. Central Command (CENTCOM) does precisely the opposite. CENTCOM integrates most staff agencies into its interagency coordination process, through its Targeting Synchronization Working Group (TSWG) and Joint Targeting Board (JTB). However, CENTCOM does not integrate all elements of theater engagement into either the TSWG or JTB, as the Central Command Communication Integration directorate (strategic communications/public affairs) and the theater security cooperation division are not TSWG and JTB invitees. The two processes of interagency coordination and effects synchronization must be merged to bring the value of each to all theater engagement elements, at both the unified command and service component levels.

Leveraging Central Command's existing core competencies and receptive leadership with the right responses to these identified gaps in the targeting process, the unified command can execute a comprehensive staff synchronization strategy that will combine the full spectrum of theater engagement elements in a horizontal and vertical integration that provides synergistic effects throughout the theater of operations. The recommendations below serve as an action plan to enable CENTCOM to improve its effectiveness in synchronizing theater engagement activities, both horizontally and vertically, across its staff and through its service component commands.

## Recommendations

To implement the four-phase land and maritime targeting cycle, also known as the Decide, Detect, deliver, Assess (D3A) methodology, Central Command must produce updated guidance, integrate disparate synchronizing bodies and fully support theater engagement through the joint operational targeting division. The decide function requires a theater campaign strategy. The directorate for plans and policy has not produced an updated strategy since 2008. This strategy is the linchpin upon which many staff actions are based, beyond theater engagement. In short, this strategy is overdue and must be updated now. The theater security cooperation division is responsible for producing a theater security campaign plan, as an appendix to the theater campaign strategy. This, too, has not been produced, due to the lack of an overarching strategy. The theater security cooperation division must begin producing this plan, in conjunction with the development of the overarching strategy, rather than waiting for strategy completion. The information operations division is leading the development of the information engagement strategy, despite the Central Command Communication Integration (CCCI) assertion that CCCI be the overall staff information integrator. Further, the strategy development has taken months and remains incomplete. CCCI must support the strategy development and leverage its position as the primary information directorate to ensure rapid completion.

The detect function requires greater joint operational targeting division (CCJ2-JOT) support to theater engagement elements across the staff. CCJ2-JOT provides embedded support to the information operations division and dedicated support to the interagency coordination division. The CCJ2-JOT must cover the entire spectrum of theater engagement elements, by also providing embedded or dedicated personnel to the CCCI and the theater security cooperation division, as those elements' leadership has desired. There are multiple efforts by the information operations division, interagency coordination division and joint operational targeting division to develop criteria for the joint integrated prioritized target list (JIPTL) and related target election standards. The JIPTL does not include personality targets, despite the desire of the information operations and interagency coordination divisions. These disparate

developmental actions must be consolidated under one divisional oversight, likely the CCJ2-JOT, for consolidation and completion and the JIPTL should include personality and other targets designated for non-lethal engagement.

The deliver function will require the greatest amount of realignment, in order to achieve comprehensive, theater engagement staff synchronization. First, the Joint Targeting Board (JTB), currently run by the interagency coordination division, must be upgraded to a Joint Targeting Coordination Board (JTCB). This may require that a higher-level decision maker chair the board, such as the chief of staff or deputy commanding general. However, the commanding general may delegate approval authority to the current Joint Targeting Board chair, the Director of Operations (CCJ3). Such delegated authority would ensure that directives issued at the conclusion of the JTCB carry the full weight of the commanding general, versus the less-binding weight of the CCJ3, as the JTB currently allows. The full range of theater engagement elements must integrate their coordinating boards and working groups into the JTCB. The Information Operations Working Group, the Communication Integration Working Group and the theater security cooperation-focused Effects Synchronization Board should all feed their findings and recommendations into the JTCB. This would also require the Central Command Communications Integration directorate and theater security cooperation division to integrate their personnel into the Joint Targeting Coordination Board (JTCB); neither element currently integrates into the existing Joint Targeting Board. Importantly, the establishment of a JTCB and supporting Targeting Synchronization Working Group (TSWG) would allow for the reintegration of the service components into the Central Command theater engagement synchronization process and would provide a formal outlet (TSWG) for service components to resolve issues of interagency coordination – an outlet currently lacking. A flowchart to illustrate the recommended integration of CENTCOM and service components' theater engagement boards, bureaus, centers, cells and working groups (B2C2WG) is shown below as Figure 4.1. The flowchart is meant to be illustrative, not descriptive.

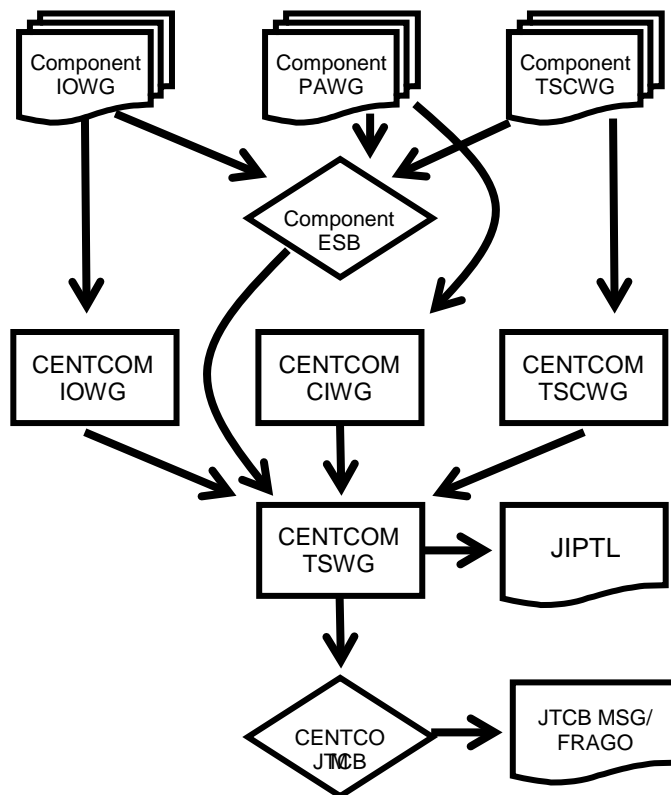


Figure 4.1: Recommended CENTCOM/Service Component Theater Engagement B2C2WG Integration

Each component conducts an Information Operations Working Group (IOWG), the results of which feed into both the component Effects Synchronization Board (ESB) and the CENTCOM IOWG. Each component conducts an internal public affairs synchronization activity, depicted here as a Public Affairs Working Group (PAWG), the results of which feed into both the component Effects Synchronization Board (ESB) and the CENTCOM Communication Integration Working Group (CIWG).<sup>93</sup> Each service component conducts a Theater Security Cooperation Working Group (TSCWG), the results of which feed into both the component Effects Synchronization Board and the CENTCOM TSCWG.<sup>94</sup> The CENTCOM Information Operations Working Group, Communication Integration Working Group and Theater Security Cooperation Working Group, as well as the service components'

<sup>93</sup> The Army Central-proposed Information Center would be a suitable alternative public affairs activity for a service component command.

<sup>94</sup> The Army Central Shape Working Group would be a suitable alternative theater security cooperation activity for a service component command.

Effects Synchronization Boards all feed into the CENTCOM Targeting Synchronization Working Group (TSWG). This activity is where service components may leverage the interagency process, as the CENTCOM interagency coordination division is recommended to continue to lead this working group, on behalf of the directorate of operations. The results of the TSWG, to include command decisions and an approved draft joint integrated prioritized target list (including lethal and non-lethal components) are then presented at a CENTCOM Joint Targeting Coordination Board (JTCB). As with the TSWG, the JTCB would include service component representation. The results of the JTCB would be published in a JTCB message or fragmentary order and disseminated back through the CENTCOM and service components for execution.

Finally, the assess function will require the establishment of assessment board process, complementary to the Joint Targeting Coordination Board (JTCB). Theater engagement strategies and actions approved at the JTCB must be evaluated post-engagement, to determine the viability of follow-up engagements or to adjust the strategies for new engagements. Proper resourcing and prioritization decisions made at the JTCB require a full understanding of previous theater engagement activities.

The implementation of the four-phase land and maritime targeting cycle, or Decide, Detect, Deliver, Assess methodology, to guide the development and execution of CENTCOM theater engagement will require strategy production, targeting personnel support and board/working group integration. These actions will ensure a more seamless execution of theater engagement, horizontally across staff functions and vertically through service components.



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See footnotes.

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